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## MEETING MINUTES

### Town of Acton Community Preservation Committee

October 13, 2011  
Acton Memorial Library Meeting Room, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor

Attending: Roland Bourdon, Tory Beyer, Walter Foster, Corrina Roman-Kreuze, Andy Magee, Betsy Mercier, Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Ken Sghia-Hughes, Peter Ashton, Doré Hunter, Janet Adachi, Town Planner Roland Bartl. Also present was Steve Noone (Finance Committee observer).

Chairman Roland Bourdon called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m.

- I. Bonding Primer by John Murray, Assistant Town Manager/Town Treasurer. The laws specify what Town can bond for and the duration. A general obligation bond is backed by the Town; the debt service is the amount that would count toward the 10% minimum required for Community Preservation Act (CPA) purposes. For example, if the Town borrowed \$2 million for an affordable housing project, the debt service (principal and interest) would count toward the 10% minimum annual expenditure required for community housing. Bonding requires a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting. The Town Treasurer then issues bonds: can issue bond anticipation notes for up to two years, after which permanent bond would have to issue. Having a AAA rating usually means plenty of buyers for the issuer's bonds. Issuance cost: \$30-50K for signing. The Town has a financial advisor for bonding. Bond counsel writes bond articles. The issuer is "Town of Acton," whether the allocation is to the Committee or the Town.

The bond term usually is 20 years for land. A "callable" bond costs more to issue because it may be "called" sooner than 20 years. A \$2 million bond for 20 years would cost \$100K.

If the Town bonds, CPA participation must continue until the bond is repaid, although the bond is a general obligation of the Town and not the CPA funds.

Mr. Murray will check as to whether borrowing costs may come from the 5% administrative allowance.

He believes that an open-space or community-housing set aside fund may be used to pay debt service for an open-space or housing purchase. Roland Bartl noted that the amount must be re-appropriated every year.

The Town of Westford has done CPA-related bonding.

State House notes are smaller bonds with smaller costs. For only \$500K of borrowing, Mr. Murray would go to State House notes, with a maximum term of 10 years. Higher

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interest rates but no issuance costs. The dividing line between State House notes and larger bonds depends on market conditions.

The warrant article for Year 1 of bonding probably would take a two-pronged approach, providing for (1) borrowing the money; (2) appropriation for Year 1 debt service.

The Treasurer has the right to borrow from internal funds, such as NESWC, etc., provided the borrowed funds are repaid within the fiscal year.

II. Reconsideration of 9/22/2011 Chairman Election; Officer Elections. Walter moved and members voted to reconsider the election of Roland Bourdon. Roland explained that he lacked time to serve as Chairman but would like to continue as Vice Chairman, and nominated Walter as Chairman. Andy nominated Roland as Vice Chairman. Tory nominated Ken as Clerk after he volunteered. Members approved the full slate.

III. 2012 Applicants - Questions and Answers.

A. Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC). ACHC Chairman Nancy Tavernier reported on pending and recent activities.

1. Purchase of two units for Acton Housing Authority (AHA). ACHC will be requesting approval from the Board of Selectmen to use \$250K from the Community Housing Fund to purchase two units for the AHA's rental program.
2. Concord Chapter 40B mitigation funds. The developer of the 350-rental-unit project in Concord is obligated to provide mitigation to Acton, in the form of \$500K to Acton for sidewalks, and \$500K to the ACHC.
3. AHA application for CPA funds. The AHA will be seeking substantial CPA funding this year, so ACHC will not be.
4. Regional Housing Coordinator. Several contiguous towns in the area have formed a regional housing group based in Sudbury. Each member town pays the regional housing coordinator, who also is the Sudbury Housing Authority director, to do what Ms. Tavernier currently does. There will be an opening in July for another town, and the coordinator would like Acton to join. To keep that option open, ACHC will seek \$35K for a two-year agreement, which is what Concord currently pays. The Town Manager would sign the agreement, but the regional coordinator would report to the ACHC.
5. Housing production plan (HPP)/housing needs assessment. Project for next year. The administration will require a full-time staff person, probably in the Planning Department. The HPP would be in coordination with the housing needs assessment. Ms. Tavernier does not want the HPP numbers misused to justify a large Concord-type project that would get the Town to the 10% minimum required for affordable housing. Acton affordable housing currently is at 6.1%, which is

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down from over 7% a couple of years ago. The Town would have to produce some 42 affordable units per year to achieve “safe harbor” protection from Chapter 40B.

B. Municipal Properties. Municipal Properties Director Dean Charter provided an overview of four projects for which he will seek CPA funding.

1. Windsor Building. This is his top priority among the four projects. He will be seeking \$225K for interior work to make the ground floor fully accessible with a basic kitchenette, bathroom and meeting space that could accompany 25-30 people. Windows, doors, painting, new roof done. Just pouring of concrete pad remains. Some Town boards already are interested in holding meetings there if the space is renovated. The ground floor currently is used for street fair events. Making the second floor accessible with the installation of an elevator is not financially feasible, so it will be used for records storage, with only Town staff having access.
2. 468 Main Street. He will be seeking \$70K to make the building accessible via an enclosed lift at the small porch off the kitchen. The Municipal Properties office is there, but most of his work and meetings are off-site, and does not raise the issue of public access. The state Architectural Access Board issued a waiver, allowing the building to remain inaccessible but also limiting use to Town staff and excluding the public, including Town board members. Making the building accessible would make the meeting space and one office available. A ramp would not work as well in the setting and would cost \$80K. Roland Bartl noted that CPA funding is available to provide accessibility in buildings eligible for historic preservation funding, if not in buildings eligible for community housing funding.
3. Memorial Library. He will be seeking \$15K to restore a small window in the fireplace wing of the 1889 room.
4. Town Hall Belfry. He will be seeking \$12K to restore the clock mechanism. Three faces are working but the north side face is not. The bell stops after midnight and starts up at 5:00 a.m. He also has included the item in his operating budget.

C. Lower Fields. Dave Wilson, representing the Friends of Lower Fields, formerly Friends of Leary Field (FOLF), provided an overview of the CPA funding proposal as well as the larger \$3 million lower fields project. FOLF is seeking \$751K in CPA funds for parking (271K) and lighting (480K) of the lower fields at the high school. FOLF is a 501(c)(3) organization. In 2004, it received \$250K in CPA funding and raised \$400K privately. The Regional School Committee approved the lower fields proposal at a recent meeting.

There is more need for the fields, with teams playing in the fall and the spring—1700 and 1500 kids, respectively. FOLF and Acton Boxborough Youth Soccer (ABYS) will take out loans for the improvement of the fields themselves; the School District

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will put in \$250K-280K and cover maintenance. The proposed parking area would be adjacent to the skate park. The Town and Recreation Commission are interested in upgrading the skate park, so part of the project funding would be for a shallow bowl next to the skate park.

FOLF and ABYS would control the schedule and rental of the fields (one town's rate is \$150/hour). Three outside groups currently are interested in long-term leases which could be in the range of \$100K-125K. One group would like to use the fields in winter. Of 4800 potential hours of use, 4K are realistically rentable, with the balance available for the community.

The School District would grant a ground lease at \$1/year. Once the loan was paid off, in 8-10 years, the project would be turned over to the School District, and run by Community Education, with 3K hours set aside for Acton-Boxborough use.

An inter-municipal agreement would divide between the School District and Town any extra revenues after the loan was paid off. Superintendent Mills and Town Manager Ledoux are discussing the proposed percentages.

ABYS would plow the fields in the winter.

There has been no discussion yet of returning any CPA funding to the CPA account.

FOLF is negotiating with three banks about financing. The proposed CPA funding would constitute 25-33% of the total funding for the project. Members noted that the lower-fields project was proposing to use about 80% of the approximately \$1 million in current-year CPA revenues.

- D. Acton Cooperative School. Tory reported that the school, located in the Baptist Church, 592 Massachusetts Avenue, would like to replace windows. She and Roland Bartl advised Sarah Lent to apply to the Committee, though that might not be this year.
  - E. AHA. Ken said that the AHA is likely to have a proposal, probably for more development funds. The Sachem Way project is costing more and is not getting some funding that had been expected.
  - F. Open Space Committee. Peter reported that the Open Space Committee voted to apply for \$400K for the Open Space Set-Aside fund.
- IV. Approval of Minutes of 9/22/2011. The minutes of 9/22/2011 were approved.
- V. Discussion of Open Space Section of 2012 Community Preservation Plan. The revision of the open-space section, as proposed by Susan, Andy and Peter, was approved.
- VI. Community Preservation Act 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. Susan attended the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. 42% of towns in the state have adopted the CPA. The House

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passed a bill providing for some gaming proceeds to go to the state's CPA funds. Stuart Saginor of the Community Preservation Coalition would like to speak to the Committee. The CPA amendment bill has the support of 26 State Senators and 90 State Representatives.

VII. Future Meetings. The Committee agreed to cancel the 10/27 meeting.

Next Meeting. The next meeting will be on Thursday, 11/3/2011, 7:30 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:52 p.m.

- Janet Adachi

### Documents Discussed During Meeting

See attached online index of 10/13/2011 meeting packet.